DC
STEEL
THE INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN
35¢
NO. 3
JUNE
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IN THIS ISSUE
2 EXPLOSIVE ADVENTURES OF...
THE HARDEST-HITTING NEW HERO IN TOWN!
YOU CAN'T HURT WHAT YOU CAN'T HIT, SLEDGEHAMMER!
SOONER OR LATER ONE O' THESE PUNCHES WILL CONNECT AN' YOU'LL BE NOTHIN' BUT A PILE OF SCRAP METAL!

WHEN HAMMER MEETS STEEL

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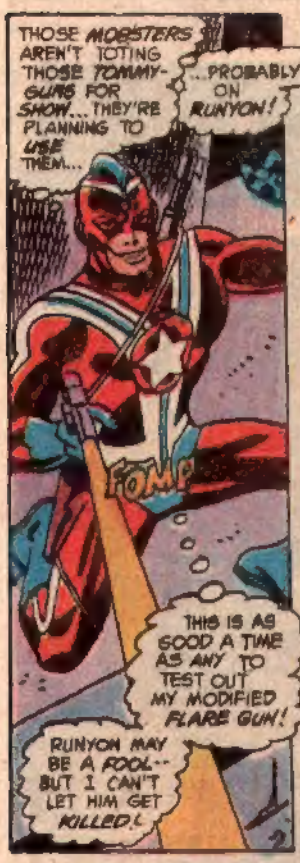
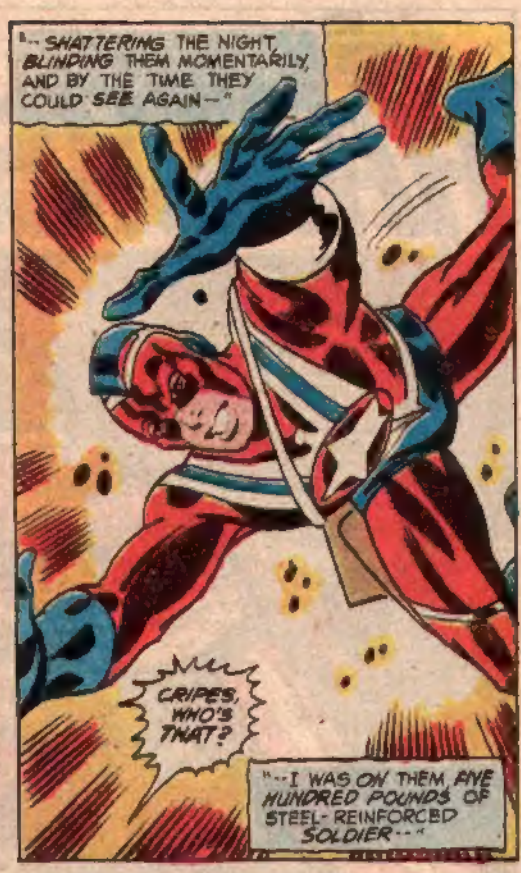

THOSE MOBSTERS AREN'T TOTING THOSE TOMMY-GUNS FOR SHOW... THEY'RE PLANNING TO USE THEM...
...PROBABLY ON RUNYON!
FOMP
THIS IS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO TEST OUT MY MODIFIED FLARE GUN!
RUNYON MAY BE A FOOL-- BUT I CAN'T LET HIM GET KILLED!

"I'D BUILT THE FLARE GUN FOR SHOCK VALUE, TO GIVE ME AN EDGE WHEN TACKLING SABOTEURS..."
POOM
"LUCKILY, IT WORKED JUST AS WELL ON HOODS--"


"...SHATTERING THE NIGHT, BLINDING THEM MOMENTARILY, AND BY THE TIME THEY COULD SEE AGAIN--"
CRIPES, WHO'S THAT?
"--I WAS ON THEM, FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS OF STEEL-REINFORCED SOLDIER--"

"--LANDING LIKE THE PROVERBIAL TON OF BRICKS!"
YAAA-RRK
BWHOMP

WHAT'S GOIN' ON? THIS WUZ SUPPOSED TO BE A LOUSY HIT, ANOTHER CRUMMY RUB-OUT!
WHERE'D THIS WEIRDO COME FROM, AND HOWCUM HE'S--
"WHOEVER THESE GANGSTERS WERE, THEY WEREN'T FROM NEW YORK... MY FIGHT WITH MINERAL MASTER HAD BEEN IN THE PAPERS JUST THE DAY BEFORE."
YEEEOW
"AS I TOSSED ONE HOOD I GLIMPSED MOVEMENT IN AN ALLEY..."
"IT WAS RUNYON, COWERING LIKE A FRIGHTENED CHILD!"
"LAST ISSUE:-AL

RUNYON EXPECTED THIS--THAT'S WHY HE WANTED ME HERE TO MEET HIM!
TO SAVE HIS LIFE!
POW KPOW POW
THIS IS NUTS!
ALL THE BULLETS--JUST BOUNCIN' OFF!
WHO IS THIS GUY?
THE NAME IS STEEL, PEABRAIN!
KRAK
SCRUNNCH
CRASH
HOLY HANNAH--IT'S THAT GUY WE HEARD ABOUT ON THE RADIO--ARRK--
THE ONE THEY CALL--THE IN-DESTROY-ABLE MAN!
BOSS! BOSS!
"AND THAT'S WHEN I SENSED IT, A SHADOW LUMBERING OUT OF THE LAST SEDAN..."
"I STARTED TO TURN, HEARING THE SOUND OF HEAVY FOOTSTEPS BEHIND ME--"
"--BUT, BY THE TIME I SWUNG AROUND--"
"--IT WAS TOO LATE!"
LAPOW!
UNNH
THOSE ARE MY MUGS YOU'RE BASHING, PALSY! MY BOYS!
AND SLEDGEHAMMER TAKES CARE OF HIS OWN!
3

"SLEDGEHAMMER! I'D HEARD THAT NAME, AND SUDDENLY I KNEW WHAT SORT OF MEN I'D BEEN FIGHTING..."

"THESE WERE THE SLIME WHO PREYED ON HUMAN WEAKNESS, WHO BARTERED LIVES AND SOLVED THEIR 'BUSINESS' PROBLEMS WITH MACHINE-GUNS..."

"THEY WERE GANGSTERS, ALL RIGHT, FROM THE HEART OF CHICAGO, AND SLEDGEHAMMER WAS THEIR BOSS, A FREAK WITH HALF-TON HANDS WHO SOME SAID RIVALED CAPONE HIMSELF..."

THOOM

"REELING FROM HIS FIRST BLOW, A PUNCH THAT STAGGERED ME EVEN THROUGH MY COSTUME'S MESH ARMOR, I TRIED TO LUNGE FORWARD..."

"--ONLY TO BE STRUCK AGAIN, EVEN HARDER THAN BEFORE--"

"--AND THIS TIME, I WAS MORE THAN SIMPLY STAGGERED!"

"LIGHTS FLASHED IN MY HEAD, AND FROM SOMEWHERE FAR OFF, I HEARD THAT VOICE, LIKE A TRUCK DUMPING GRAVEL..."

WHERE IS HE? WHERE'S THAT ROTTEN LITTLE PUNK-- RUNYON?

I SWORE I'D KILL THAT LOUSY--

HUH?

REEEE

SIRENS! COPS!

WE AIN'T GOT NO PROTECTION IN THIS TOWN! IF THE FUZZ FINDS US, WE'RE FINISHED!

WHATDA WE DO, BOSS? BLAST THIS STEEL CREEP?

NO TIME! WE GOTTA GET BACK TO THE HOTEL-- FAST!

"SLEDGEHAMMER'S VOICE FADED, CAR DOORS SLAMMED, THERE WAS A ROAR OF MOTORS, DYING OUT AS THE SIRENS GREW LOUDER, THEN STOPPED..."

"THROUGH LAYERS OF RETURNING CONSCIOUSNESS, I HEARD THE POLICE ARRIVE: THEY SOUNDED CONFUSED, UNCERTAIN..."

POLICE

"AND THEN I HEARD ANOTHER VOICE--"

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

"--RUNYON'S!"
IS--IS IT OVER? IT'S SAFE NOW, ISN'T IT?
I'LL HAVE THE POLICE COMMISSIONER'S HEAD FOR THIS!
NEW YORK ISN'T SAFE! LORD, IT'S 1939--AND IT'S LIKE LIVING IN THE WILD WEST!
FOR GOD'S SAKE, RUNYON, SHUT UP!
FIRST GIVE ME A HAND GETTING OUT OF THIS BUS--
--AND THEN START EXPLAINING, AND MAKE IT GOOD!
SAINTS, SON! TO SURVIVE THIS--WHAT'RE YOU MADE OF, STONE?
STEEL, OFFICER. JUST STEEL!
WELL, RUNYON? THOSE EXPLANATIONS...?
I-I'LL TELL YOU, STEEL, BUT NOT HERE...
OH, AND WHERE WILL YOU BE TELLIN' IT, MIGHT I ASK?
SHOTS WERE FIRED AND PEOPLE WERE ENDANGERED, AND IF THERE'RE ANSWERS TO BE HAD, THEN IT'S THE POLICE WHO'LL HAVE THEM!
OFFICER, DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?
EMPIRE STATE BUILDING
MY NAME IS EDWARD RUNYON...PUBLISHER OF THE NEW YORK STAR...AND I OWN A SIZEABLE CHUNK OF MIDTOWN MANHATTAN, INCLUDING MOST OF THIS BUILDING!
MAYOR LAGUARDIA WILL VOUCH FOR ME. I'LL PROVIDE A FULL REPORT TO THE POLICE COMMISSIONER PERSONALLY--TOMORROW MORNING.
AHEM! COUGH...
WELL, IN THAT CASE... GOODNIGHT TO YOU, SIR...AND HAVE A PLEASANT EVENING!
"I'D KNOWN RUNYON WAS POWERFUL, BUT I'D NEVER IMAGINED HOW POWERFUL UNTIL THAT MOMENT..."
"YET, WHEN WE ARRIVED AT HIS PRIVATE OFFICE ON THE 86TH FLOOR OF THE WORLD'S TALLEST SKYSCRAPER--"
"--HE ABRUPTLY SEEMED TO SHRINK, AND STARTED TO TREMBLE."
ANSWERS, RUNYON. YOU PLACED A FULL-PAGE AD IN THIS AFTERNOON'S "STAR"--
--ASKING ME TO CONTACT YOU OUTSIDE THE BUILDING THIS EVENING.
STEEL PLEASE CONTACT "DAILY STAR" TUESDAY--9:00 PM
YOU KNEW THAT THIS SLEDGEHAMMER GANGSTER WOULD BE WAITING THERE TO KILL YOU, AND YOU PLANNED FOR ME TO STOP HIM...
WHY? WHAT'S SLEDGEHAMMER TO YOU--AND YOU TO HIM?
WHAT'S THE SCORE?
I WATCHED YOU AT THE ARMY TESTING GROUND A FEW DAYS AGO, STEEL...
LAST ISH:--AL
5

YOU MAY NOT HAVE IMPRESSED CONGRESSMAN KUL HAMMER AND THE MILITARY BRASS WITH YOUR SUPERIOR CAPABILITIES AS A SOLDIER, BUT YOU IMPRESSED ME...

...AND THOUGH I DON'T AGREE WITH YOUR POLITICS, I DO NEED YOUR HELP.

...TO SAVE ME FROM MY PAST!

"I WASN'T BORN RICH, STEEL. I COME FROM CHICAGO'S WEST SIDE, FROM A FAMILY AS POOR AS ANY SHARECROPPER'S..."

"AS A BOY, I RAN WITH A HARD CROWD--"

"...AND IT WAS WHILE I WAS WITH THAT CROWD THAT I FIRST MET EMIL SLEDGESKI..."

THAT'S THE NEW KID, THE POLLACK!

LOOKIT HIM, HE'S A REGULAR FREAK!

HIS HANDS DO SEEM... DISPROPORTIONATELY IMMENSE.

ALWAYS WITH THE BIG WORDS, HUH, RUNYON?

A FREAK IS A FREAK-- RIGHT, FREAK?

NO ENGLISH!

DUMB POLLACK-- DOESN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND AMERICAN!

"BUT EMIL DID UNDERSTAND A SHOVE, AND WHEN MY FRIENDS SHOVED HIM AGAIN AND AGAIN--"

POW

"EMIL SHOVED BACK--"

"-HARD!"

SMAK

"THOSE DEFORMED HANDS PROVED POWERFUL WEAPONS: EACH ONE MUST HAVE WEIGHED TEN POUNDS..."

"AND AFTER THAT FIRST FIGHT, NO ONE EVER CALLED EMIL SLEDGESKI A 'FREAK' AGAIN..."

"AT LEAST NOT TO HIS FACE..."

"I NICKNAMED HIM SLEDGE-HAMMER..."

"WE BECAME FRIENDS AND I WAS HIS ONLY FRIEND..."

"AND WHEN THE DAY FINALLY CAME THAT EMIL KILLED A BOY WITH THOSE MASSIVE FISTS, I WAS WITH HIM TILL THE POLICE TRACKED HIM DOWN, TIPPED BY SOMEONE UNKNOWN..."

THAT WAS FIFTEEN YEARS AGO. HE SERVED TIME FOR MANSLAUGHTER, AND I WENT TO WORK FOR A NEWSPAPER.
HE BECAME A MASTER CRIMINAL... AND I WORKED MY WAY UP THE RANKS, ACCUMULATING MONEY, POWER, PRESTIGE...
IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU WERE BOTH FAIRLY SUCCESSFUL.
IS THAT SARCASM?
MAYBE. WHY DOES HE WANT TO KILL YOU, RUNYON?

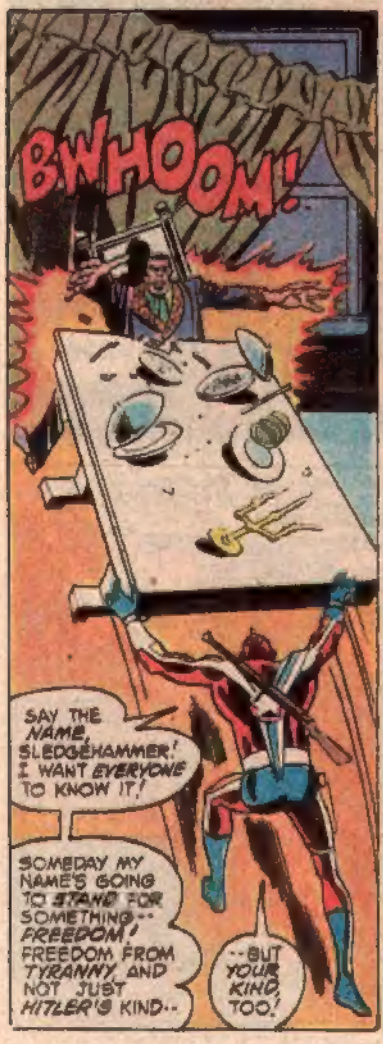
WHO UNDERSTANDS A SICK MIND? I RECEIVED A TIP THAT EMIL WAS IN NEW YORK, AND THAT HE INTENDED TO ATTACK ME TONIGHT...
I THOUGHT OF YOU... PLACED THAT AD... AND PRAYED.
YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN.
SLEDGEHAMMER MENTIONED A "HOTEL"... ANY IDEAS ON THAT?
THE "ELITE"-- IT'S NOT-SO-WELL-KNOWN MOB HANGOUT.

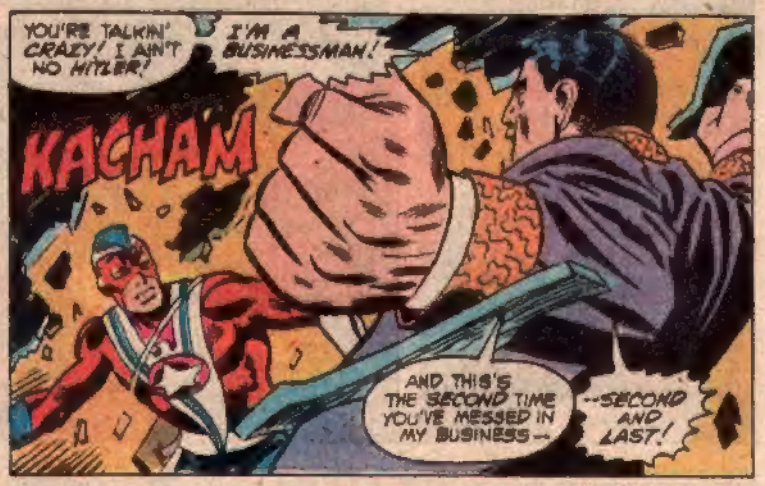
THEN THAT'S WHERE I'LL FIND SLEDGEHAMMER.
GET YOUR COAT, RUNYON. YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.
NONSENSE.

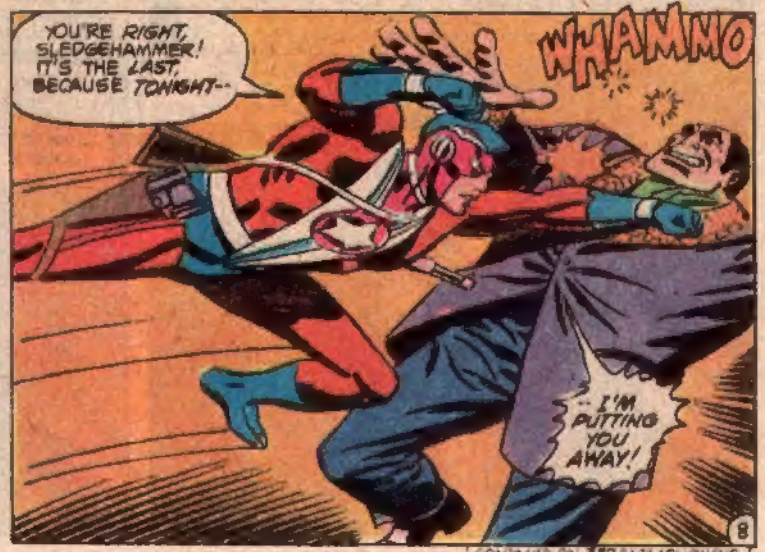
I HAVE A DINNER ENGAGEMENT WITH CONGRESSMAN KULHAMMER'S DAUGHTER KATHY, AND I COULDN'T POSSIBLY...
ULP!
YOUR COAT, MISTER.
MOVE!

HANK HEYWOOD'S JOURNAL: "THE 'ELITE' WAS A RUN-DOWN IMITATION OF THE WALDORF TUCKED IN ONE OF MANHATTAN'S LESS SAVORY NEIGHBORHOODS..."
"RUNYON WAS SHIVERING WHEN WE SLIPPED DOWN AN ALLEY BORDERING THE HOTEL, AND HE ALMOST WHIMPERED WHEN WE SPOTTED SLEDGEHAMMER'S FLUNKIES STANDING GUARD..."

"I IGNORED HIM AND USED THE RIFLE I'D APPROPRIATED FROM THE WESTCHESTER FEDERAL ARMORY WEEKS AGO..."
"INSTEAD OF CARTRIDGES, IT NOW FIRED ANESTHETIC DARTS..."
WHUF
"I'D INTENDED TO USE THEM FOR FIGHTING SABOTEURS, LIKE MY FLASH GUN--"
KWHUF







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WHAT'RE YOU, RUNYON'S STOOGE?
HE BETTER BE PAYIN' YOU GOOD TA SAVE HIS HIDE-- 'CAUSE IT'S GONNA COST YOU YA LIFE!
SWHAMM
I THOUGHT I WAS STRONG WITH MY MICRO-MOTOR MUSCLES!

HE JUST PLANTED HIS FIST IN THE WALL-- AND DIDN'T EVEN FEEL IT!
THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA-- A SLIM ONE!
KRAK
WHAT'S WITH YOU AND RUNYON, SLEDGEHAMMER?
WHY COME ALL THE WAY TO NEW YORK FROM CHICAGO-- JUST TO WIPE OUT RUNYON?

IT TOOK ME FIFTEEN YEARS TO CONNECT THIS NEWSPAPER GUY WITH THE KID I USED TO KNOW...
...FIFTEEN YEARS-- SWEARIN' I'D KILL THAT KID FOR WHAT HE DID!
NOW I'VE FOUND THAT CREEP--

--AND I'M GONNA BURN HIM--
--BUT FIRST, I'M GONNA SQUASH YOU LIKE A BUG!
NOW! I'VE GOT TO ACT FAST, TWIST OUT OF THE WAY--

--AND KICK, WITH EVERY OUNCE OF POWER I HAVE!
DAWHAM!
"I CAN LIFT A THOUSAND POUNDS WITH MICRO-MOTOR-POWERED MUSCLES, AND THAT'S A LOT OF MUSCLE TO PUT IN A SINGLE BLOW..."
"SLEDGEHAMMER COULD TAKE IT, BUT SOMETHING HAD TO GIVE...

" ...AND IT DID! THE HOTEL WALL!"

SLEDGEHAMMER WENT CLEAR THROUGH THE CONCRETE, EMBEDDING HIMSELF HALF-IN AND HALF-OUT, LIKE SOMEONE IN A STOCK...

...LUCKY FOR HIM THERE WERE NO BEAMS IN THE WAY... OR HE'D BE SOMEWHAT MORE THAN DAZED.

THIS WAY, BEFORE THE POLICE ARRIVE. I'LL HAVE TIME FOR SOME QUESTIONS...

AND SO, NOT LONG AFTER...

HE WON'T BOTHER YOU FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER FIFTEEN YEARS, RUNYON.

DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME YOU TALKED?

M-ME? WHAT ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT, STEEL?

NOT EVEN TO YOURSELF, RUNYON?

REMEMBER YOU TOLD ME THAT "SOMEONE [illegible]" TIPPED THE POLICE TO EMIL [illegible] HIDE-OUT?

I'M AN HONEST MAN... I HAVE NOTHING TO CONFESS...

SLEDGEHAMMER TOLD ME THE TRUTH, RUNYON...

...THAT SOMEONE WAS YOU! EMIL SLEDGESKI WAS BETRAYED... BY HIS "BEST FRIEND:"

YOU-- EDWARD RUNYON!

PLEASE... YOU MUST UNDERSTAND! I WAS A BOY, I WAS AMBITIOUS...

...I HATED THAT SLUM, I'D HAVE DONE ANYTHING TO GET OUT... GET A REWARD...

I'M NOT CRITICIZING YOU, RUNYON. SLEDGEHAMMER WAS A KILLER... PERHAPS UNINTENTIONALLY, BUT EVEN SO, HE'D COMMITTED A CRIME.

STILL...

...WOULD HE HAVE BECOME THE GANGLORD HE IS TODAY, IF YOU HADN'T SET HIM ON THAT PATH BY YOUR BETRAYAL?

THINK ABOUT IT, RUNYON.

MAYBE SOMEDAY YOU'LL HAVE AN ANSWER.

THE END

STEEL

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN

"RETURNING TO THE BASE ON *LONG ISLAND* AFTER MY LITTLE ADVENTURE WITH *RUNYON*, I FELT *DEPRESSED*... A MIXTURE OF *DISAPPOINTMENT* AND *ANGER*..."

"...AND AS I CHANGED FROM MY [illegible] UNIFORM, WITH ITS PROTECTIVE LINING OF *ARMOR MESH*, INTO MY MARINE KHAKIS, I WONDERED *AGAIN* IF I'D EVER REALLY *UNDERSTAND* MY FELLOW MAN... OR *LIKE* HIM, IF I *DID*..."

RUNYON'S *GOT* TO BE A *SPECIAL CASE*. AT LEAST I *HOPE* SO...

BECAUSE IF THAT'S WHAT THE *REST* OF THIS WORLD IS REALLY LIKE, WHY AM I RISKING MY *LIFE* TO STOP THIS *INSANE WAR*..?

A NIGHT WITHOUT HEROES

US ARMY 2 OUZ. CA

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I HATE *HITLER* AND HIS *NAZIS* BECAUSE THEY'RE THE *LOWEST KIND* OF HUMAN BEING, WORSE THAN *ANIMALS*...

BUT IF THE ALTERNATIVE TO A HITLER IS SOMEONE LIKE *RUNYON*--

NO! I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT!
UH-OH! TEMPER, HEYWOOD! THIS QUARTERMASTER'S BARRACKS ISN'T FAR FROM THE BASE COMMANDER'S BUNGALOW--
--IF MAJOR MORTON HEARD THAT CRASH, YOUR BUTT'S IN A SLING!
CLEAN UP, BOY--
--USE THOSE MICRO-MOTORS PROFESSOR GILES GAVE YOU TO HELP MOVE ALL THE STEEL SUPPORTS IN YOUR SKELETON--
--AND GET YOURSELF IN GEAR!
GOOD! I'VE REPACKED THE CRATE, FIXED THE BROKEN SLATS-- ALL I HAVE TO DO IS STASH MY STEEL OUTFIT UNDER SOME LOOSE FLOORBOARDS--
--AND ONCE I'M IN MY KHAKIS, I CAN SNEAK BACK TO MY SQUAD'S BARRACKS UNSEEN!
NO SIGN OF THE MPS. I'VE LUCKED OUT--
KEEP OUT
--BUT THIS IS ONE DRILL I NEVER WANT TO REPEAT!
AS PRIVATE HEYWOOD SETTLES IN FOR THE NIGHT, FOR OTHERS, IN NEW YORK CITY, THE NIGHT IS JUST BEGINNING.
WELL, MR. RUNYON, IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU ARRIVED.
I WAS WONDERING WHETHER YOU'D FORGOTTEN OUR DATE FOR DINNER.

HAR-HARDLY, KATHY, MY DEAR... I'D SIMPLY BEEN DE-DETAINED DOWNTOWN BY SOME UNPLEA-UNPLEASANTNESS..
EDWARD, YOU'RE ALL OUT OF BREATH! IS SOMETHING WRONG?
FRA-FRANKLY, I JUST HAD THE MOST TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE.
IS THAT ALL? WELL, DO TELL ME ABOUT IT, EDWARD..
...I JUST LOVE A GOOD COMEDY!
THAT'S THE LAST OF THEM. THE HOTEL'S FULL NOW... ALMOST EVERY WEALTHY MAN AND WOMAN IN MANHATTAN IS THERE TONIGHT...
ALL ATTENDING THAT SPECIAL AFTER THEATER DINNER...
The Plaza
...ALL RIPE FOR PLUNDER...
POCKET GADGETEER
BY THE GADGETEER!
FWOOSH

HANK HEYWOOD'S JOURNAL: "I'D HARDLY GOTTEN BACK TO MY BARRACKS AND INTO BED WHEN THERE WAS A COMMOTION AT THE DOOR, ONE OF THE COMPANY SERGEANTS..."

HEYWOOD... SAY, HEYWOOD! MOVE YOUR MEAT, PRIVATE...

THE MAJOR WANTS TO SEE YOU PRONTO!

NOW WHAT? MY GOD, IF SOMEONE SAW ME SLIPPING OUT OF THE STOREROOM ... NO, DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT, HEYWOOD...

"IT TOOK ME TWO MINUTES TO REACH THE COMPANY OFFICE, BUT MAJOR HANNIBAL MORTON GLARED AT ME AS THOUGH I'D TAKEN THIRTY..."

I DON'T LIKE LOSING SLEEP, PRIVATE. YOU'RE A DAMN GOOD QUARTERMASTER CLERK, BUT THAT DOESN'T GIVE YOU SPECIAL PRIVILEGES...

...CLEAR, SOLDIER?

UH... YES, SIR.

YOU'VE GOT A FIANCÉE NAMED GLORIA GILES, DAUGHTER OF GILBERT GILES, THE PRINCETON PROFESSOR?

IS ANYTHING WRONG WITH GLORIA, SIR?

NOT HER, PRIVATE...

...OLD MAN GILES. HE JUST HAD A HEART ATTACK, AND HIS DAUGHTER WANTS..OR NEEDS ..YOU TO BE THERE.

YOU'VE GOT TWELVE HOURS HARDSHIP LEAVE. IF YOU NEED MORE, WE'LL DO WHAT WE CAN. NOW GET MOVING, SOLDIER!

"I COULDN'T HAVE ANSWERED IF I'D WANTED TO: MY MOUTH WAS DRY..."

"... AND MY HEAD FELT LIKE SOMEONE HAD TRIED TO SHAVE ME WITH A BASEBALL BAT! THANKS TO GILES, I WAS STEEL, AND NOT A CRIPPLE..."

HE WAS THE CLOSEST THING I HAD TO A FATHER; IF HE DIED..."

"... I COULDN'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT"

MEANWHILE, IN THE BALLROOM OF A FAMED NEW YORK HOTEL...

THAT... COSTUMED CHARACTER WE SAW DOWN IN WASHINGTON,* EDWARD...

WHAT WAS IT HE CALLED HIMSELF? IRON? COPPER?

STEEL, KATHY. HIS NAME IS STEEL... DAMN HIM.

* IN STEEL #2.—AL

WHY, YOU SOUND BITTER, EDWARD DARLING! IS ANYTHING WRONG?

NOTHING. I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT THAT SANCTIMONIOUS VIGILANTE...

...HE HAD THE NERVE TO CALL ME A-- WELL, NEVER MIND.

I THOUGHT HE WAS RATHER CUTE. IN FACT...

...I WAS RATHER HOPING TO SEE HIM AGAIN, SOMEHOW. PERHAPS... SOCIALLY?

ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?

YOU'RE CONGRESSMAN KULHAMMER'S DAUGHTER -- YOU CAN'T BE SEEN WITH HIM! AND BESIDES -- WHAT ABOUT ME?

WHAT ABOUT YOU, EDWARD DEAR?

EEEEE

EEEE

WHY, KATHY, I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT YOU AND I WERE --

EEEYAAAHH!

THAT SOUND! THAT HORRIBLE SOUND!

WHAT IT IS, MY LOVELY, IS AN ULTRA-SONIC STUNNER -- MERELY THE MOST OBVIOUS OF THE GADGETS IN MY REPERTOIRE!

IT'S DESIGNED TO FORCE ALL OF YOU INTO HELPLESS SUBMISSION!

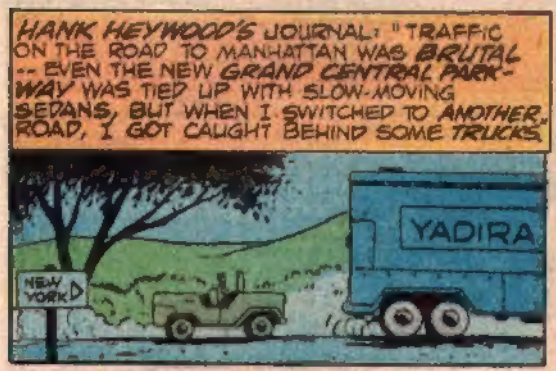
EEEEEEEE

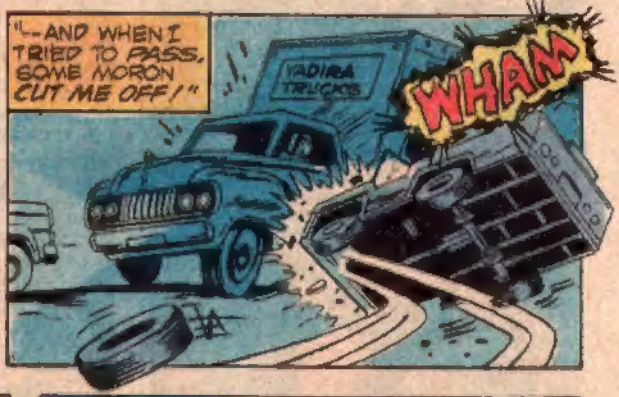
RATHER GOOD, EH? BUT WHAT ELSE WOULD ONE EXPECT--

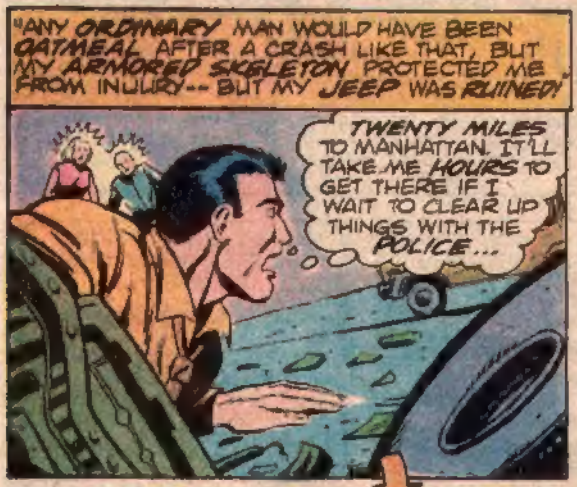
-- FROM THE GADGETEER?

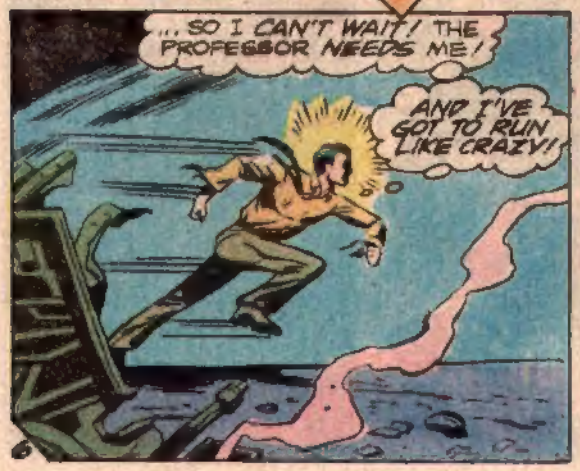
AND NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND, PLEASE PLACE ALL YOUR VALUABLES ON THE TABLE BY THE DOOR...

...AND I DO MEAN ALL!









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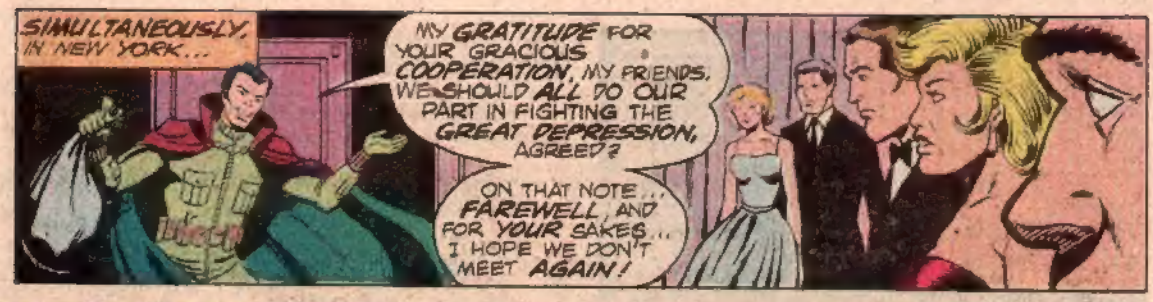

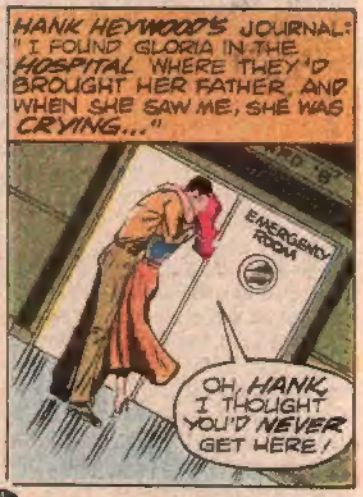

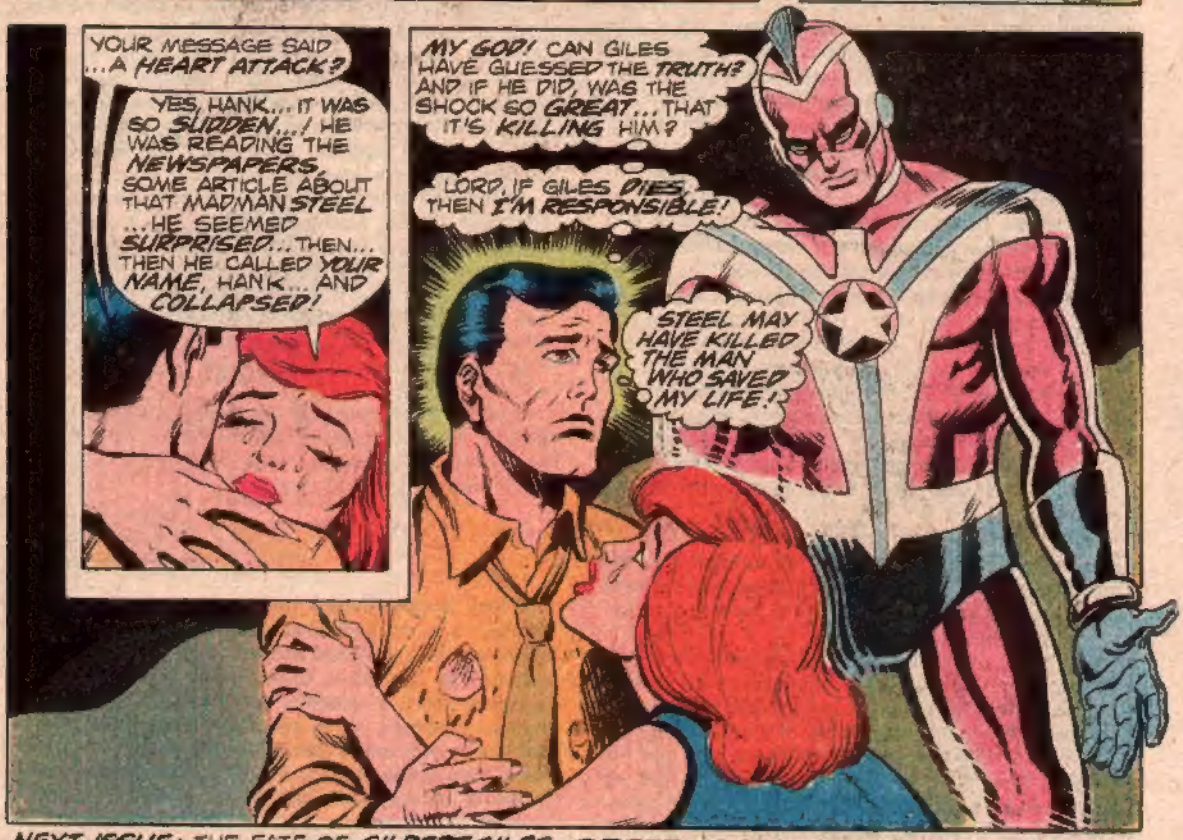

NEXT ISSUE: THE FATE OF GILBERT GILES ... THE MENACE OF THE GADGETEER... THE INTRIGUES OF KATHY KULHAMMER... AND THE TORMENT OF HANK HEYWOOD...

GREED-GAMES of the GADGETEER! AND **MANHUNT!**

ON SALE MAY 27th!

Dear Sirs:

I follow few DC comics, but **STEEL, THE INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN,** while not being all it could be, shows potential of becoming one of the better comic magazine series. Its potentials are still partly clouded, but can be summed up in a few questions.

Who or what is **Steel?** So far we have a brilliant "Joe Blow" American who enlists at the drop of a dime (or Poland) and ends up pitting himself against the "forces of evil" as **the** champion of democracy. All good and fine, but . . . I can detect no soul.

We have to look below his facade of averageness. If there is nothing there, we have only a shade of a person, a cardboard cutout matched against assorted newsprint nasties. Come now, Gerry! Who could identify with that except a tree? Let's look deep, past the tinfoil exterior and find the real Hank Heywood. Let's take a look at his strengths, and more importantly, his flaws. Steel, you know, is cast from iron and carbon.Carbon comes in two forms, graphite and diamond. Graphite is the form used in steel, and is one of the softest materials known.

Henry "Hank" Heywood: brilliant assistant of Dr. Gilbert Giles . . . Hank is a man of action. He knows when to act, and does so without hesitation. He is a conscientious citizen, and acts on his own set of ethics no matter where he is. He is patriotic, and plows into saboteurs without pause. But our indestructible man is flawed . . . or more accurately, tempered.

He is proud. He is stubborn. He is headstrong, giving no thought to his own safety. He must move, must act, must be the catalyst. Maybe the torment he went through was this: inability, non-motion, non-being. He couldn't stand it. So . . . his fight against the saboteurs and fifth columnists is not really primarily against them, it is against non-involvement . . . against the inertia of his nation, and what he sees as the apathy of his fellow-Americans. **He** sees what is going on, why doesn't everyone else?

Now, perhaps, we can see who he is. Hank is steel, emotionally as well as physically. His torment will continue as long as America ignores Europe, and perhaps after war is declared. All this leads to my last question . . . where is **Steel** heading?

Hank has perhaps up to two years before the U.S. declares war. He has nine months or so before Congress starts to "beef up" the national defense. I'd like **Steel** to be considered more of a vigilante by the government. Hank is going to very soon run into the "America First Committee." This committee left no stone unturned before WWII to discredit all would-be interventionists. This committee guided senators, Charles Lindbergh, William Randolph Hearst, and others. It is more than likely that Gloria and her father will join this group or an affiliate.

I would also like Hank to see the bigotry on both sides of the war. Issues in the future, we may see what happens to Hank and his friends when the Nisei are put in re-location camps during the war. Maybe Hank could have a Japanese/American friend?

Any direction you take, Gerry, I'm sure **Steel** won't go anywhere but Up.

Howard Kinyon,
4096 Valley Hwy 9,
Deming, Wa. 98244

Your letter was greatly appreciated Howard, particularly since it answered most of its own questions. Your suggestions of what lies behind the men called *Steel* show that there *is* a depth of character in Hank Heywood, or a *soul*, as you call it. This is an area that will become more and more apparent in future issues, aswe also answer your last question about where Steel is heading. As to how close you came in your speculations about Steel's direction, you'll just have to keep watching.—CB.

* * * * *

Dear Al,

You know, at first glance, Steel looks like the **Six Million Dollar Man** wearing one of **Fighting American's** old costumes. Well, fortunately, I think there's a lot more to him than that. Actually, I think you've got a war hero here who could be as good as **The Unknown Soldier.**

Now, the key word there is **war** hero. The most interesting part of the book was **before** Hank Heywood put on his costume; after that it seemed like instant dullness. This guy Baron Death doesn't seem like he'll be so hot either: he looks as dull as Baron Blitzkrieg and Red Panzer put together. I think, then, that **Steel** would be best out of costume, operating as a special agent.

That's kind of a radical change to suggest in a new character, I know, but the first 11 pages were so good **without** any super-heroics, that I wish you could do the whole series that way. It's rare to see so much space given to background material, but it paid off 100% and was the highlight of the book. Consider this: Bionics are pretty ho-hum for a super-hero; but for an average Joe they're hot stuff indeed. It just might serve to make the whole comic more exciting.

Steel ought to meet Sgt. Rock and DC's other battle stars . . . it almost always makes for a good story. Also, it seems I've got to suggest a letter column name: how about "Indestructible Mail"?

Beppe Sabatini,
516 Division St.,
E. Lansing, MI. 48823

Not bad, Beppe, though personally we prefer "Steel Filings," a name suggested by production ace Todd Klein, who also designed and executed the logo for the column. As for Steel being more exciting out of costume, that's a question we'll ask you readers to answer. However, we're not sure we understand the distinction you made about bionics being dull for a super-hero, while being "hot stuff" for an average joe. It seems to us that ANYONE with such bionic powers, whether costumed or not, would fall into the classification of super-hero. But what do the rest of you think? Let us hear from you at the address on the top of the page, and until then, take care, people.—Cary Burkett